Application Serial No. 09/483,248
Amendment Dated February 6, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated November 7, 2003

Listing of Claims

29. (Currently Amended) A method for automated staining of specimen slides supported in a slide tray, the method comprising

providing a reagent pack supportable in the slide tray and comprising reagents for staining a [[the]] specimen slide, a first identifier and a second identifier, said first identifier and said second identifier identifying a staining protocol,

removing said first identifier from said reagent pack,

applying said first identifier to said [[a]] specimen slide,

reading said first identifier on said specimen slide and said second identifier on said reagent pack, and

~~verifying~~ identifying the staining protocol in response to reading said first identifier and said second identifier.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 further comprising:

initiating the staining protocol in response to said first identifier being the same as said second identifier, and

not initiating the staining protocol when said first identifier is not ~~verified with~~ the same as said second identifier.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising scheduling staining protocols for a plurality of specimen slides.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising placing the reagent pack in said slide tray adjacent said specimen slide.

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33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein the first and second identifiers comprise the same information.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein the reagent pack comprises a set of wells for reagents for a staining protocol.

35. (Currently Amended) A method for automated staining of specimen slides comprising:

> providing an apparatus comprising

> > at least one slide tray holding a first specimen slide and an associated accompanying specific reagent pack having reagents for processing said first specimen slide and identifiers for a first staining protocol,

> > an automatic staining head assembly operatively associated with said slide tray, said staining head assembly reading said identifiers, obtaining said reagents from said reagent pack and depositing said reagents on said first specimen slide,

> > a control system controlling said staining head assembly, and

> > a first input operative to cause said control system to pause said staining head assembly during processing, and

> > a second input operative to cause said control system to restart said staining head assembly after pausing,

> > adding a second specimen slide to said apparatus during a processing of said first staining protocol for said first specimen slide, and

> > initiating said control system to cause said staining head assembly to initiate processing of a second staining protocol for said second specimen slide.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising initiating said first input prior to adding said second specimen slide.

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37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein said identifiers comprise a barcode and said method further comprises initiating a staining protocol in response to reading said barcode with said staining head assembly.

38. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 35 wherein said second specimen slide requires initiating [[a]] said second staining protocol therefor prior to completion of [[a]] said first staining protocol for said first specimen slide and the method further comprises initiating said second input to start an autocontrol program initiating [[a]] said second staining protocol for said second specimen slide prior to the completion of completing said first staining protocol for said first specimen slide.